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Thursday, April 21, 2016

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More than just a meal



AUSTIN GOODER/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Dorothy Staples of Ridgeway is shown here waving goodbye to a Meals on Wheels volunteer. She is one of the dozens of residents who use Fort Erie Meals on Wheels services daily. See page 4 for more information about the program.

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SARAH FERGUSON/FORT ERIE TIMES/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

The provincial government will invest \$662,000 in cycling infrastructure improvements in Niagara through the Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program. The announcement was made Monday at Steve's Place Bicycles and Repair in Fort Erie. From left, are Niagara Parks Commissioner Michael Goodale, Fort Erie Mayor Wayne Redekop, Niagara-on-the-Lake Councillor Jim Collard, Regional Chairman Alan Caslin, Kathryn McGarry, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, St. Catharines MPP Jim Bradley and Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Pat Darte.

Funds coming for more cycle-friendly paths

SARAH FERGUSON
Fort Erie Times

Cyclists will have easier access to trails across Niagara thanks to a funding boost from the Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program (OMCIP).

The provincial government has committed to spending \$662,000 in cycling infrastructure improvements in Niagara through the OMCIP.

"Cycling has grown and almost three million more people (in Niagara) hop on their bikes at least once a week during the fall, spring and summer. Many more are cycling during the winter months," Kathryn McGarry, parliamentary assistant to the minister of transportation, said Monday.

"That's is precisely why

the provincial government is investing \$10 million over the next two years to help build and improve existing cycling infrastructure through the OMCIP."

Following its launch last July, the OMCIP, a two-year program, invited municipalities across Ontario apply for up to 50 percent of funding to a maximum of \$325,000 for cycling infrastructure projects.

Eligible projects for funding include the installation or improvement of on-road cycling lanes, off-road cycling and walking paths, cycling-specific traffic signals and signs, active transportation bridges and bike racks.

The goal of the program is to develop better cycling networks, promote safety and enable cycling to be better recognized as a viable mode

of transportation.

McGarry said \$325,000 will be spent to build a new 1.06 kilometre cycling and walking path that "offers an off-road alternative" to Merrittville Highway in Thorold "and provides improved access to Brock University."

Fort Erie will receive \$250,000 to improve "a scenic three-kilometre long section" of the Niagara River Trail, which forms part of the Greater Niagara Circle Route and the Trans Canada Trail network. The project includes a new off-road path for walking and cycling and a signed bicycle route on a shared road-way.

Niagara-on-the-Lake will receive \$87,000 to construct a new 1.2-kilometre cycling and walking path along Niagara Stone Road, connecting Virgil to historic Old Town.

"This work will separate cyclists from motor vehi-

cles on a busy road and provide a safer route to schools and tourism destinations," McGarry said.

Funding will be released this spring and all of the projects will be completed by 2018.

McGarry made the announcement that Niagara will receive funding during a media event at Steve's Place Bicycles and Repair in Fort Erie.

Fort Erie Mayor Wayne Redekop, Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Pat Darte, Regional chairman Alan Caslin, Niagara Parks Commissioner Michael Goodale and St. Catharines MPP Jim Bradley were among the political dignitaries in attendance.

Caslin said investment in Niagara "is critical when it comes to active modes of transportation."

"(Cycling) means improving our health. The number one concern is lack of activ-

ity in health. Safety is another significant consideration on what we need to do to make our roads safer," he said.

Caslin, an avid cyclist himself, said he is looking forward to using the new trails once they are completed.

Redekop said the funding is an opportunity for the Town of Fort Erie and NPC to celebrate the completion of the Niagara River Recreation Trail system that "runs between NOTL and Fort Erie."

He said there has been "a gap in the trail system," which is why the Town of Fort Erie partnered with the NPC to apply for funding to improve the trail. The project, which is estimated to cost \$300,000, will provide a seamless ride for cyclists along the trail between Riverwalk Park and Bowen Road.

The NPC commission will contribute \$150,000 to the project, with the Town

licking in \$100,000 and the remaining amount to be paid for through the OMCIP.

Darte, thankful for the funding, said the grant would have a positive impact on NOTL.

"These funds will provide construction of an off-road multipurpose trail... that will connect part of the town to one of our schools on the furthestmost point," the Lord Mayor said.

NOTL is "home to several path networks identified through the Region's trail master plan," which include the Upper Canada Heritage Trail, he added.

With the addition of a new secondary school moving into "the heart of NOTL," Darte said the OMCIP funding is good news.

"It's important for us to get our children back and fourth in a safe manner and keep them on their bikes," he said.

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Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program

• The province is investing a total of \$10 million in cycling infrastructure in the province over the course of the next two years as part of the OMCIP. \$662,000 will be spent in Niagara.

• Of those funds spent in Niagara, \$25,000 will be spent to build a 0.6 km cycling and walking path to provide an off-road alternative to Merrittville Highway in Thorold and improved access to Brock University. \$250,000 to improve

a 3-km section of the Niagara River Trail in Fort Erie, and \$87,000 for a 1.2 km cycling and walking path along Niagara Stone Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

• Following its launch in July 2015, municipalities across Ontario were invited to apply for up to 50 percent of funding at a maximum of \$325,000 for cycling infrastructure projects.

• The goal of the program is to develop better cycling networks, promote safety and enable cycling to be better recognized as a viable mode of transportation.

Briefs

Town to grant special honour to two military regiments

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Ridgeway, Fort Erie is preparing to grant an important military honour to two regiments.

Council agreed Monday to grant Freedom of the City to two regiments that fought valiantly in the Battle of Ridgeway nearly 150 years ago.

These regiments still exist to this day, though under different names.

Honoured with the Freedom of the City are the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, formerly known as Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto, and the Thirteenth Battalion of Infantry, formerly the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry.

Granting Freedom of the City to important regiments dates back to Medieval times.

When military units arrived at new towns, town leaders would have to grant them the freedom to enter the city.

This freedom would only be granted after the unit earned the trust of the citizens through acts of heroism.

Today, granting Freedom of the City to a military unit is ceremonial and a means of recognizing a military unit for its actions.

Both regiments to be honoured were part of the 841 troop defense against the Fenians.

The honour bestows a scroll to the commanding officer of the

regiments, and gives them the freedom to march through town at any time with "drums beating, banners flying and bayonets fixed."

Council awards ash tree removal contract

Council voted Monday to grant Allen Tree Service the current contract for removing Ash trees on private properties.

The town is remaining vigilant against the Emerald Ash Borer beetle, an invasive Asian species of beetle that burrows into Ash trees and kills them.

Mayor Wayne Redekop says at least 60 per cent of the town's tree canopy is Ash tree at this time.

Allen Tree Service is expected to remove 125 trees from the south side of town.

Town staff has not yet prepared a replanting plan for the trees, but it does anticipate replacing them within the next calendar year.

Healthy Ash trees that are removed for precautionary reasons can still be used to make wood products.

Councillors agree to tiered medical response contact

The Ministry of Health has demanded that Fort Erie's Fire Service enter into a tiered medical response contract with Niagara Emergency Medical Services.

This contract would legalize the current relationship between Niagara EMS and the Fire Service, where Niagara EMS dispatches Fort Erie's stations to calls in Fort Erie.

On Monday, council voted to enter into a contract with NEMS to extend the relationship.

Had council not voted in the positive, NEMS would have no longer been permitted to dispatch Fort Erie stations as of May 20, 2016.

Council approves new security service for Bay Beach

A new security service is taking over Bay Beach, but it should be much of the same for 2016, according to council.

Neptune Security submitted a bid to the town when previous contractor Cantec Security's contract with the town expired.

Going forward, parking tickets in the area will be handled by town bylaw officers and not security services as was the case in previous years.

Town staff anticipates having security on site from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on most days, but expects to see varying times for holidays and special events.

The town's budget for 2016 also includes a surplus should any additional security concerns arise over the summer.

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Program serves up hot meals to people who need it most

AUSTIN GOODER
Special to the Fort Erie Times

A warm, nutritious meal delivered right to your kitchen can be a blessing on an otherwise bad day.

Meals on Wheels provides that service and it does it using a fleet of volunteers and dedicated public servants who have community in their hearts and minds.

"I do it because we enjoy it," Sharon Kenney, a volunteer driver and server with Fort Erie Meals on Wheels, said.

"It's like giving back to the community, and the people we help are so openly thankful for what we do."

It's a love for community service that helps draw people like Nancy Ryan to remain involved with Meals on Wheels.

Ryan is one of the coordinators for Meals on Wheels' large-scale operation, and she laid out what the program entailed.

According to Ryan, the project serves mostly senior citizens, but can also be used by younger people who may be dealing with injuries or other issues that prevent them from either cooking for themselves or leaving home to purchase groceries.

"The great thing is that the meals come hot, fully cooked and are ready to eat," Ryan said.

Ryan's office is located in St. Paul's Church located on the Niagara Parkway.

Inside, Ryan demonstrates exactly what each meal will look

like when it's dropped off.

"The meals are created by the dietician at Gilmore Lodge. We ask the client what they need and what they can't tolerate, and staff at Gilmore Lodge prepares the appropriate meals," she said.

Meals are specifically catered to match dietary restrictions and needs of different patients. This can include considerations for renal patients or diabetics, among other concerns. They also try to accommodate to taste as best they can.

Ryan helps manage Meals on Wheels out of her office. She calls clients to check on them, see how the program is working for them, and keep them up to date on what's happening.

The meals, however, are prepared and packaged at Gilmore Lodge.

Ryan said the packages they use at Gilmore are great because they are dual-ovenable, meaning they can be warmed in an oven or a microwave.

This is helpful for clients who may choose to save their lunch for dinner, or reheat portions on weekends where the project isn't in service.

In the back kitchen at Gilmore Lodge, volunteer drivers gather each and every weekday to collect and prepare to deliver meals across the town.

Jan Eade, a volunteer driver, says she volunteered so she could give more time to the community.

"Our volunteers are always very happy, and they see the difference in each and every house they visit," Eade said.

On April 8, Marian Lewis, also known as "The Teacher" or "Flash" to her colleagues, used an outline that carried her into Ridgeway and Crystal Beach.

Ryan said Lewis is the de-facto trainer for new volunteers that enter Meals on Wheels.

Lewis earned the moniker by showing dedication to the art of volunteering and a compassion to clients she was visiting on a nearly-daily basis.

One such client was Dorothy Staples of Ridgeway.

Staples lives alone in an apartment, but receives Meals on Wheels support as an aid to her everyday life.

Staples recognizes the value of having good meals delivered daily, and she said she enjoys the visitation and meals greatly.

Down the hall in the same building, Louise Sider also receives a meal from Lewis.

Lewis takes time to explain to every client how each meal is freshly prepared the morning they're delivered.

Sider finds it helpful, and understands the need for a service like Meals on Wheels.

"Well it's a big change, naturally, but it's the way it has to be," Sider said.

"Everything's got to be changed as time goes on, but I'm happy with what I've had."

Sider says she used to live in a big house, but finds comfort now in the daily meal deliveries and small visits with volunteers.

Lewis plucks through her remaining deliveries within the building. She's careful to ensure that each client gets their specific meal that includes a label showing each dietary restriction the client may have.

Afterwards, Lewis heads back to the car and travels down Derby Road to drop off for a client who recently had open heart surgery.

The client was able to cook for himself, but doctors suggested Meals on Wheels as a means of making his recovery just a bit easier.

At her final stop on the route, Lewis finds herself at the home of a married couple who both take Meals on Wheels service.

The Bassanos welcomed Lewis in through the front door. Lewis gently placed the food on the table, asked them how they were doing, and left them to eat.

Ryan suggests that the program isn't just about giving meals, and those small conversations Lewis has with her clients are actually part of something much more important.

"Often, we're the only people they see in a day," she said.

"So it's a safety check for the clients. If the volunteer notices something is off about the client, they're expected to either alert us or call 9/11 if needed."

Ryan says her volunteers have encountered situations where the volunteer was the one to discover a dire situation.

One volunteer years ago had delivered a meal to a client on Friday.

When she returned Monday with a fresh meal, she found her client lying on the floor with a broken hip. She'd been there since only a shortly after the volunteer had left Friday.

Ryan said that without the volunteer, it could have been a lot longer before the client was noticed, because the client didn't have many visitors.

Another patient was a former veteran who preferred to have volunteers leave meals in a cooler on

his porch that he could access after they'd left.

When returning on a Tuesday to place a new meal in the cooler, the volunteer noticed the previous day's meal hadn't been eaten yet.

The volunteer banged on the door hoping to get a response, but got none.

Two medical emergency services and police were able to get into the house through a window.

Responders discovered the client lying in bed after diabetes caused his foot to go black and ache badly.

Without Meals on Wheels showing the attention to detail that they do, it's likely these people may not have made it.

Ryan says that they're more than happy to take on this hefty responsibility.

Meals on Wheels boasts a monthly Wheels to Meals luncheon, where the clients are picked up by volunteers and brought in for an afternoon of food and entertainment.

Ryan sees these luncheons as a rare opportunity for some clients to socialize with peers.

"We had a fiddler and a guitarist at one, and people were tapping their feet and singing along. Music is the great equalizer, and it brings something out of everyone who comes," Ryan said.

Back at Gilmore Lodge, volunteers trickle in to drop off their carrier bags.

On Monday, they'll be back on the roads again delivering meals to those in need.

In 2015, they delivered over 17,000 meals to nearly 300 different clients across town.

"Every meal we deliver is a positive note in someone's day," Lewis said.

Volunteers like Lewis make that note carry on and on.

Austin Gooder is a Niagara College Journalism-Print student. You can send him an e-mail to austingoodermedia@gmail.com.

Journalism student inspired by Meals on Wheels volunteers

Inside the Kitchen of Gilmore Lodge, Nancy Ryan showed me how the volunteers at Meals on

Wheels prepare for their routes. There are six routes. Each route has a binder. Each binder has a set of maps and directions.

Then there are the instructions for how to deliver each meal. Ring this buzzer, knock here and yell, take the elevator up and take a left.

Ryan zips up a binder after showing me the contents, slips on a hat and dives into one of the route cooler bags that hold the drinks and desserts that go with each hot meal they'll deliver that day.

CONTINUED • PAGE 5



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Services such as Meals on Wheels 'need to be protected'

CONTINUED FROM > PAGE 4

Some customers don't do dairy, so they take a juice. Or others don't want the hot soup so we'll replace them with juice as well, she says.

She counts quickly and ensures each cooler bag is loaded to match the dietary needs of the clients on that bag's route.

Just as Ryan closes the cooler bag and moves to the next, the first volunteer of the day slips into the room.

"Are you coming with me?" she asks. I'm a tall guy, so she's looking almost straight up. Her eyes are kind and she seems excited to get the day started.

Ryan breaks the news that, in fact, I'm scheduled to head out with another volunteer.

I tuck myself into the corner as more volunteers come in, and eventually my driver, Marian Lewis, pokes her head through the door.

Lewis was wearing big, chunky glasses and a wool jacket. She looks around without removing the glasses and finds me in the corner.

We get acquainted before Ryan gives us our bags for the route.

She asks if Doug Gooder is my dad, and says she knows him from work.

No, I say. My dad is Bill. Doug is my great uncle.

Lewis looks quizzically at me, and then turns to pick up the cooler bags.

The air is frosty, and a fresh layer of snow was coating the grass, but the insulated bags will keep the food warm, she says.

I climb into the passenger seat of Lewis' car and she starts driving up Gilmore Road on our way to our first drop-off near the end of Dominion Road.

Lewis tells me she sells Avon products, and finds she has a lot of time to dedicate to Meals on Wheels.

She doesn't volunteer every day, but she's one of the first Nancy Ryan will call if they're short on drivers that day.

We turn left onto Sunset Drive at the end of Gilmore. Lewis wants to check on how the new high school there is shaping up.



SARAH FERGUSON/FORT ERIE TIMES

Niagara College journalism-print student Austin Gooder spent a day volunteering for Fort Erie Meals on Wheels. He said volunteers like Marian Lewis inspire him.

As we drive by, she seems excited to see you. Others might be more nervous and eager to get their meal and send us out.

I slung my camera over my shoulder as we pulled into the first driveway of the day. It was an easy drop-off.

The client was rarely home during the day, so Lewis and Meals on Wheels had made arrangements to leave the meal in a fridge at the back of the house.

Lewis has been with Meals on Wheels for over 12 years. It's not the first time she's delivered to this house, though they often shake up the routes the drivers take in an effort to keep them as short as possible.

It's all a part of keeping the meals as hot as possible.

The meal of the day is a pork cutlet with barbecue sauce and mashed potatoes. On the side are corn, peas, a cup of soup, a piece of bread

and a dessert.

For the religious, a piece of fish takes the pork's place.

It became immediately clear to me that this wasn't just about the meals for volunteers like Lewis.

When Lewis entered an apartment, she addressed everyone by name, chatted with them, asked them about their lives and took a genuine care about their wellbeing.

The compassion Lewis showed was exceptional and breathtaking. She was making a real, tangible difference in the client's lives in more ways than one.

It doesn't seem like much at first blink, but retrospect provides a better grasp of what these small visits do for the clients.

Clients like Dorothy Staples or Olive Winger or Shirley White all demonstrate how important Meals on Wheels is.

Services like Meals on Wheels need to be protected at all costs. By any means necessary, a service like this one that makes a noticeable change in the town's outlook.

Coming back along the Niagara River, Marian tells me about her daughter. I get a glimpse into the personal life of someone who shows an inherent care for others.

At the end of the day,

Marian drops me off at my car at St. Paul's in Fort Erie. In my car, the silence overcomes me, and through

no effort of her own, Marian Lewis has inspired me.

Austin Gooder is a Nia-

gara College Journalism-Print student. You can email him at austingoodermedia@gmail.com

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The
Fort Erie Times

Peter Conradi regional editor
Sarah Ferguson editor

Point of View

Autistic kids suffer from government waste

One of the most controversial and hurtful things a government can do is change rules retroactively.

It's why the decision of Premier Kathleen Wynne's government to retroactively change the rules governing the treatment of autistic children in Ontario has infuriated parents.

Wynne insists the changes will provide \$333 million to the Ontario Autism Program, give 16,000 more children access to treatment and shorten waiting lists for a child with autism from 2 1/2 years to six months by 2021.

But parents are furious, saying the changes really are designed to save the government money by inadequately funding the treatment of autistic children.

Basically, the government is removing thousands of children who are on a waiting list for a program known as Intensive Behavioural Intervention

(IBI) after they reach age five.

Many of these parents have had their children on this wait list for years, desperate to have them undergo IBI therapy, which they believe will give their autistic children the best possible chance at a normal life.

But the government has decided to apply the bulk of its funding for IBI to children in the age range of two to four years, saying an expert panel advised this is the time when IBI therapy does the most good.

Parents whose children are being removed from the list will get \$8,000 next year for their children's treatment which, they say is inadequate given that IBI treatment, which takes about 20 hours a week, costs \$5,000 a month when purchased privately.

The government also will allow these parents to apply for a less intensive form of therapy, Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), which parents say isn't as effective.

There are two lessons here.

First, this is what inevitably happens when governments -- and in particular this Liberal government -- waste billions of dollars on scandal after scandal after scandal like eHealth, cancelled gas plants and the Ornge air ambulance mess. Eventually, there isn't enough money to properly fund programs for which there is a clear need.

Second, Irwin Elman, provincial advocate for children and youth, says the approach the Wynne government has taken "does little to engender trust, hope or confidence to families who watch their children inch closer to aging out of a program dependent on early intervention."

Irwin wants the government to grandfather children who are on the IBI wait list and to extend the May 1 date of the implementation of its new plan so it can do the job correctly. We agree.

— Postmedia Network

Do you remember?



We received no calls or e-mails about last week's photo of the smiling children, so it will go back into the "unidentified people" binders here at the Fort Erie Historical Museum. This week's photo has a woman demonstrating the new invention of the airbag. Does anyone recognize her or know when airbags in cars became mandatory? Please call the museum at 905-894-5322 or e-mail museum@forterie.ca.



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Tulip tree is a majestic figure in Marcy's Woods

It is magnificent and it's in DiCenzo's Marcy's Woods in Fort Erie. John Kieran, nature writer, has described this forest wonder and I quote from him: "There is a tall and stalwart tree that is not only magnificent in bulk but distinctive in almost every part."

It has a trunk like a Greek column and a lovely flower that late Fort Erie naturalists, Bert

Miller, captured on camera in 1956.

Also it has an odd-shaped leaf and high up conical clusters of winged seeds that will stand out reddish-



When Nature Calls

brown against the cold blue sky in late Autumn.

In winter, buds will look like miniature thumbless mittens.

That's not all.

Stop on the Lower Trail In Marcy's Woods far down the trail and look at and up at Liriodendron Tulipifera, or the Tulip Tree.

The bark of this old tree is deeply fissured and a rich brown in colour.

Looking up to the leafy canopy, focus your binoculars on a leaf. They are in a class by themselves.

We have no other tree leaf in North America with such square and broadly indented tips.

Our Niagara Conservation Authority adopted this unique leaf years ago as its symbol.

I have two good photos of the Tulip Tree flower - both of them have six green petals crossed by a bright orange band with yellow borders.

It's an attractive flower usually not seen too well because it grows so high up.

Remember this is a Carolinian tree. There are not too many found in Ontario. Most are located in Southern Ontario in areas on the north shore of Lake Erie.

Backus Woods near Long Point and Rondeau Provincial Park still have great stands.

For some strange reason this tree is also called Yellow Poplar. Poplars are basically weed trees and their lumber is virtually useless.

Not the magnificent Tulip

tree for its wood is prized in the lumber industry.

The wood is light and quite strong.

Protect our local Tulip trees from being cut for they are long-lived.

Watch a Tulip Tree's leaves in the Fall. They will begin to turn to gold in spots and dappled patches.

The late great Fort Erie naturalist, Bert Miller, would have said, "Glory to God for dappled things."

In the early 1950s that giant tulip tree of Rosellish was cut down. That tree was 19 feet high and five and a half inches in circumference.

I know, because as a boy I helped measure it. The late Bert Miller tried to protect it.

I recall how distraught he was when it fell to the lumbermen.

It was estimated by a University of Western Ontario scientist at over 400 years old.

What a shame for the citizens of our town who love trees. Be a protector of defenseless trees.

Are there old trees in Fort Erie that need protecting?

Earl Plato is a Fort Erie resident, local historian and nature lover.

Library to mark anniversary of Shakespeare's death with screening of Macbeth

This month, it has been 400 years since William Shakespeare's death, and we observe this anniversary with a screening of his tragic masterpiece, *Macbeth*, the play in which arrogance leads to murders and madness.

Starring Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Sean Harris and David Thewlis, this all-new *Macbeth* will play tonight at 6:30 p.m. at the Centennial branch of the Fort Erie Public Library. It is rated 14A for violence and disturbing content. Enter three witches: a story of *Macbeth* by popular young people's



Fort Erie Library

author Caroline B. Cooney is a retelling of the tale for teen readers.

On Wednesday, April 27, published poets will visit the Centennial branch to share their work, and we invite new poets to join us at 7 p.m. for an open mic reading opportunity. This event is in celebration of

Poetry Month, a time to enjoy poetry and its vital place in Canada's culture.

We encourage all the public who appreciate poetry and the spoken word to join us for a very 'original' evening. There is no charge to either read or attend.

Next week's film is *Creed*, starring Sylvester Stallone as Rocky Balboa and Michael B. Jordan as Adonis Johnson, the son of Adonis Johnson, the son of Adonis Johnson, the son of Adonis Johnson. This sports drama of strength, determination, and opponents more deadly than those in the ring, will be screened on Tuesday, April 26 at 2 p.m. at the

Crystal Ridge branch, and on Thursday, April 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the Centennial branch.

May the 4th be with you! Young people ages seven through 14 are welcome to celebrate at the Centennial branch on Wednesday, May 4 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Honour your favourite galaxy far, far away by making lightsabers and Star Wars buttons, watching spoofs, and playing games. Brush up on your Jedi knowledge and you might win our Star Wars Trivia contest. Costumes are welcomed but not required. There are robots in the

library. Thanks to the Ontario Library Capacity Fund, several small robots are now part of the teaching and programming toolkit of the library, and all ages will be able to develop digital literacy skills with Sphero, Dash, Ozobot and Lego Mindstorms. Sphero races through obstacle courses; Ozobots are colorful reading robots, and Dash learns new tricks the longer you play with it. Watch for a Robot Club for children this summer, and a June event geared for older adults.

If you are a member of a group that has board meetings, annual meetings or

public events, and is short on space, consider renting a community room at the Centennial or Crystal Ridge branches of the library. New audio-visual equipment at both locations makes presentations a stress-free experience for programmers, and a pleasure for those attending.

Watch our website, www.fepl.ca, the Facebook page or our Twitter feed to keep up with all the exciting events at the library.

Amy Roebuck is the community services coordinator at the Fort Erie Public Library.

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From the gardener's journal

"The time of singing the birds has come" is a quote that came to mind often this past week as I worked in the garden.

I like to think of myself as a hobby farmer and so every spring I work the land. As I worked away outside the birds kept me company with their songs and flitted back and forth to the feeder. While we drank our coffee one morning, my husband and I spotted a red headed woodpecker in our bush.

He may have been there before but this was our first sighting. Such colour and energy.

Not only do the birds give evidence of this lovely season, the ground is warming up and clearing away the debris of the winter brings the pleasure of work well done and demonstrates how much growth is taking place out of sight.

If you have an opportunity to join a clean up group in the town in the next few weeks, do so. The satisfaction of seeing results within a short time is so positive.

Our Garden Sprouts Club has begun to wind down and we are cramming our growing projects into the next three weeks. These lovely children are indeed the future scientists, botanists and horticulturalists. A great promising group for the future of our environment.

Our greenhouse is alive with colour and scent as the early cuttings of vegetables mature and



RUTH VOLD MARKLE
The Gardener's Journal

bring their strength to the growth. It is a challenge to keep everything pest free and well watered. This past winter we actively fertilized and I believe that has given us the desired growth and bloom we see now. Habits are easy to instill. As we seed and transplant the kids know to add fertilizer to help growth. So that tender care you take the time to give at the start of growth has major dividends later.

All winter I would take cuttings of the annuals home to shape and restart the growth. These would go into water until they rooted. That practise has brought us new and fresh growth and in the trimming back of the larger annuals, this has stimulated them to new growth. This win-win practise has brought us great joy, as we see our favorites multiply and fill out.

Walking along the trails we can see the start of the lady slippers through the bushes. We sighted the fox as she was heading for cover. I expect she has a couple of kits again this year. These new babies are another sign that spring is here to stay.

The temptation to be outside all the time is for me another sign of spring's stamp on our

land. So I rush in to cook and rush back out to catch more sunshine. Perhaps you are like me in that practise. If you are, then this week's recipe is for you and for me (See box).

This month is traditionally known as Volunteer Month. If you know some spectacular volunteers then be sure and say thanks. Many give of their time and resources year around. A huge thank you to all the volunteers. You all make a big difference in our lives.

See you on the trails, at the beach and in gardens around town. Thanks for staying in touch as always, keep growing

Ruth Vold Markle is the vice-president of the Fort Erie Horticultural Society.

CHILLY GARDEN PIZZA

- 1 container (6.5 ounces) low fat garlic & herb spreadable cheese
- 1 package ready to serve Italian pizza crust (12 inches)
- 3/4 cup fresh chopped spinach
- 1/2 cup diced cucumber
- 1 large tomato chopped (approx 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp pepper
- 1/4 cup shredded carrot

Spread cheese over pizza crust. Top with spinach, cucumber, tomato, mushroom and basil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Top with carrot. It should be ready within 15 minutes and will make six servings.

Old Man Rock Band returns to the Sanctuary



NADINE PIZZICAROLA
Sanctuary for the Arts

I really hope you got to enjoy the outdoor shows last weekend. It was so lovely outside.

Hello, patio season! I even got some light gardening in and a bonfire. All and all, it was an amazing weekend.

We are so very pleased to inform you *Old Man Rock Band* is coming back for the third time starting Tuesday, April 26 to June 28, 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. If you are an amateur musician 35 years and older with the heart and soul of a rock star, this one is for you.

Become part of a band and polish your skills in a caring and sharing environment. Ten sessions will give you structured weekly practice, discussions and presentations for an introduction fee of only \$150. Best of all, you get to show off your talents to a live audience.

Check out www.oldmanrockband.com or e-mail andy@oldmanrockband.com to register or for more info.

One of Canada's most beloved bands Sloan is going to shake things up at the Bell Tower Sanctuary on May 8. It's a great way to finish any Mother's Day celebrations. Limited tickets are still available at F&B Salon in Fort Erie, Brimstone Brewing Company and on www.brimstonebrewing.com.

ticketscene.ca for \$30. Doors open at 8 p.m. The show starts at 8:30 p.m.

It is time to think about the 3rd annual Albino Rhino Beer Fest at the Sanctuary - Centre for the Arts. The Albino Rhino aka Chad McGee has succeeded once again in scoring amazing local breweries and food vendors for this event on May 14.

Expect deliciousness in a beer glass from 30 different breweries such as Niagara Oast House Brewers, Silversmith Brewing Company and Redline Brewing and I think your culinary appetite will also be satisfied.

Part of Ridge Road will be closed just like last year which will give you lots of outdoor space to enjoy your treats. Best of all, you are supporting a fantastic cause with all proceeds from the festival going to the Ronald McDonald House.

Advanced tickets are available for \$20 or \$25 at the door and can be purchased at Brimstone Brewing Company or

ticketscene.ca. You'll receive a sample glass to keep and three sampling tokens. Don't forget to bring your ID. This is a 19 and older event.

On May 27, I CAN-T-E-R is inviting you to a comedy night featuring well known Comedy artist Joe Pillitteri. Prepare to laugh all night long in support of this not-for-profit charitable organization that has been operating in Ridgeway for over 23 years. Tickets to this event are available at Brimstone Brewing Company, icantergicenter.ca and on ticketscene.ca for \$25.

The talented local musician Mark Clout will be playing the Tap Room at Brimstone Brewing Company on May 12 and 26 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Enjoy Classic Rock, a cool one and maybe a delicious treat courtesy of Crave Local Fresh on a Thursday night - a great way to slowly get your weekend started.

For more information about what is going in at The Sanctuary - Centre for the Arts visit www.the-sanctuaryarts.org or like us on Facebook.

Hope to see you soon. Until next time.

Nadine Pizzicarola is the events coordinator for the Sanctuary Centre for the Arts.

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FESS student receives Brock Scholarship Award



SHOOTED PHOTO/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Lucas Claxton received a Brock Scholars Award from Brock University worth \$16,000 for its Concurrent Education program in Secondary Language and Literature.

FORT ERIE SECONDARY SCHOOL Special to the Fort Erie Times

"Words...words...words!"

—Hamlet Act 2, Scene 2.

While many students in high school English classes drown in the sheer number of words they must absorb in reading novels and plays, Fort Erie Secondary School student Lucas Claxton instead thrives, turning his gifts for wordsmithing into both dollars and a promising future.

Claxton continues a growing trend of FESS students excelling in academics, having accepted a Brock Scholars Award from Brock University for its Concurrent Education Program in Secondary Language and Literature, an achievement which at the end of this semester will result in \$16,000.

A former English Award Winner and Valedictorian at Fort Erie's Garrison Road Public School, Claxton has set his sights on teaching high school English.

Citing Patrick Sierrani as his most influential teacher for starting him on his career

path, including helping him in script writing and film-making, Claxton is currently enrolled in an online eLearning writing course to hone his professional writing skills.

As well as his regular and online classroom involvements, Claxton is assisting in a Cooperative Education placement, working with Mr. Sierrani in a Grade 11 Univer-

sity English class, participating in seminars and helping students with their own writing projects.

Outside the classroom, Claxton works at Sobey's in the meat department, learning the butchering trade. A few of his key interests are filmmaking, writing, and video gaming. Some of his films can be found on the FESS YouTube channel.

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Health Corner

Digital Everything & Digital Dentistry

Finally summer is here and I hope everyone is having a great time.

One thing that amazes me is how everything is now digital. Music, movies, pictures, and even books! I am thinking in a few years, people won't remember paper books anymore.

Even dentistry is going digital. It is not new that many dental offices now have digital x-rays. It is also very common that many dentists work with digital charts. But do you know that now we can make a digital crown?

Last week, I discussed the need for crown restorations for structurally weak teeth. However, I did not mention that a conventional crown procedure is not the easiest job. For those who remembered getting a crown, it is a bit of an ordeal. First, a dentist has to prepare a tooth for the porcelain. Then, the dentist takes a rubber impression or two to capture the details of the



Dr. John Inigo

prepared tooth. Then the patient receives a temporary crown glued with temporary cement. After that, the dentist and the patient have to wait often 2 weeks for the crown to be fabricated by a lab technician. Then the dentist gives the crown to the prepared tooth.

It is a very important procedure but do you know that now many crowns can be designed and fabricated digitally within an hour after the preparation rather than 2 weeks? The technology is called Cerec. Let me explain how this works for patients and dentists.

Rather than taking impression, the digital video camera is used to capture the image. Then the

dentist can load the image to a computer and design the crown exactly how he or she wants. Then the file goes to a milling unit (I called it a robotic lathe) and then the crown is fabricated often within 30 minutes. Sounds too far-fetched? Well, as you can imagine, most patients who see the Cerec crown procedures for the first time, are blown away by the technology.

Sometimes it is scary how much more technology will be available for dentistry. Well, actually it is very exciting.

Dr. John Inigo is a practicing general dentist in Fort Erie and Ridgeway, Ontario. He can be reached at Inigo Bertie Dentistry and Inigo Ridgeway Dentistry, 905.871.2903 and 905.894.5555.

For further information and discussion, please visit his office at www.inigodentistry.com

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BANK LOCAL

A look back
at the week
in Niagara



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2016 State Of The Region Event

On April 12th, Regional Chair Alan Caslin will address the business community of Niagara at his second annual State of the Region event, at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls.

In his keynote, he reviewed and reflected upon the past year in Niagara, while also addressing business plans for the future of the region.

One of the major themes of the Chair's address was the aligning of shared priorities and goals between Niagara Region and all levels of government, which will ensure that future developments and projects are completed in an efficient and harmonious manner.

The event was put on in partnership by all Niagara Chambers and Business Associations - the Greater Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, the Grimsby & District Chamber of Commerce, the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, the Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce, the Welland/Pelham Chamber of Commerce, the West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, the Niagara Industrial Association, the Niagara Realtors Association, the Niagara Homebuilders Association, and the Niagara Construction Association.



Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School students performed for the crowd.



Bob Watson, CEO of PenFinancial Credit Union, co-title sponsor of the event, welcomes the guests.



Group of Executive Directors, Chair's of Boards of Directors of participating Chambers and Business Associations with Chair Caslin.



Chair Alan Caslin



Mishia Bulson, CEO Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce



Lena Demarco, Regional Director, Community Affairs for Bell, a co-title sponsor of the event introduces Chair Caslin.



Janice Thomson, Executive Director of Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce thanks Bob Seguin and Harry Schlang for their service on behalf of all Niagara Chambers



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Caslin sets affordable housing target

MARYANNE FIRTH
postmedia network

It's time for Niagara to knock down the affordable housing waiting list and to build up its inventory of units for people in need.

That was one of the key messages Regional Chairman Alan Caslin delivered last Tuesday to about 500 politicians and business leaders who gathered at Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls to hear his annual state of the region address.

During a question and answer period following his speech, the regional leader announced his personal target to see the hefty housing waiting list — which he pegged at between 5,500 and 6,000 households — reduced by 1,000 spaces before the end of the term in 2018.

"The way we've done business in the past, it's not working," Caslin told the crowd, while outlining Niagara's need to build more units.

"We need to make sure that we can accommodate not only people on the waitlists, but those in need in the future, too."

The Region needs to look at "different ways to do business," Caslin said, whether that means partnering with developers and builders, or finding other means to magnify efforts to reduce the waiting list.

Speaking with media following his public presentation, Caslin acknowledged the 1,000-space goal is ambitious, but certainly worth

striving for nonetheless.

Discussions with developers are underway, he said, and the Region is "casting out a net to see what people are prepared to do for us on a private builders, private investors basis."

Caslin recognized that there are other communities that handled housing better than Niagara.

The Region, he said, needs to "step up our game and to work a little harder on that particular element of our strategic plan."

During his address, Caslin outlined several areas where Niagara has made strides over the past year, including advances with transportation.

He touched on the recent inclusion of the GO train expansion from Toronto to Niagara Falls in the provincial budget and spoke about the efforts to create a regional inter-municipal transit system.

"We are beyond just talking on this issue," Caslin said, adding this past week the regional working group of St. Catharines, Welland and Niagara Falls rewarded an RFP to Dillon Consulting, which will help develop a suitable model for the expanded service. Options are expected to be brought forward by the end of the year.

Caslin touched on what he called council's proactive business approach, with new funding, investments and opportunities being actively pursued.

He referenced a trip made to Porter Airlines to promote



MIKE DIBATTISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Regional Chairman Alan Caslin delivers his state of the region address on Tuesday at Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls.

opportunities for potential use of Niagara District Airport.

In the Q & A that followed the address, Caslin spoke about his conversation with Porter CEO Robert Deluce, who he urged should consider using the Niagara-on-the-Lake facility as a service bay for planes and for overnight parking.

The potential for a popular commuter service between Niagara and Toronto Island airport exists, he said, "think of the catchment area."

Creation of the Region's transportation master plan

will include development of the area's two airports.

"It's a system that we have to have in order to make ourselves successful to attract a commercial carrier in Niagara," Caslin said. "We're spending a lot of time and energy on trying to do that."

Caslin's speech also touched on the Region's youth retention efforts, local aid offered to resettling Syrian refugees and work being done by the Region's economic development division, in partnership with provincial and federal part-

ners, on a foreign trade zone designation.

He lauded regional staff for the hard work needed to meet the zero per cent increase guidance set by council for 2016 and acknowledged that it's unlikely a similar goal will be seen in consecutive years.

"We need to balance our infrastructure needs," Caslin said, adding if no increase is ever seen, roads, sewers and other basic elements of the community will deteriorate.

"We're not going to let our community erode to achieve

zero."

Caslin also took time to acknowledge coming departures of chief administrative officer Harry Schlange, who submitted his resignation last Friday, effective May 27, and economic development director Bob Seguin, who retires April 25 and will be replaced by David Oakes from the City of St. Catharines. He thanked both men for their contributions to the Region.

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CAO loss leaves questions

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

In wake of the resignation of Niagara Region's chief administrative officer Harry Schlange, some councillors want to hear more about the challenges encountered by the municipality's top bureaucrat.

Schlange submitted his resignation letter to regional council Friday, effective May 27.

In the confidential document, obtained by Postmedia Network, Schlange said that while "great strides" were made toward achieving some goals for Niagara, he faced serious roadblocks during his time at the Region.

Schlange, who has accepted a job as CAO for the City of Brampton, cited problems with the leadership and behaviour of regional council, but made no mention of any particular incident nor specific members.

St. Catharines Council Brian Heit had hoped Schlange would be given an opportunity to speak with council prior to making the decision to take the new position.

He was bothered that last Thursday's lengthy council meeting addressed only one unrelated issue — bio-diversity offsetting at a Niagara Falls development — and did not provide time for Schlange to "speak to us privately about where he feels he's having some issues."

Schlange helped to "change the culture at the Region," Heit said, crediting him for bringing a more proactive and businesslike approach to the corporation.

He also praised him for being a "strong individual" and standing up to what Heit referred to as "bullying" within council chambers

and pressures to create staff recommendations that aligned with certain political agendas.

Heit fears Niagara may have difficulty finding the strong talent it needs to "handle difficult individuals that we have around that table."

Top candidates, he said, may have heard "about the coming of our councillors and some of the things going on" and be deterred from applying.

"A CAO might not want to come down here into Niagara, into this hornet's nest. We might not get the best people applying."

For Niagara Falls Council Bob Gale, the CAO's letter to council wasn't as harsh as he felt it was made out to be in the media.

"I didn't enjoy the letter, but it is what it is and we move on," he said, adding he felt some councillors were trying to make the situation seem worse than it is.

"I've never seen a company where employees loved the boss. Naturally there's going to be some disgruntled thoughts," he said.

In every organization, there are always "employees who don't love what's going on," Gale said. "Harry was one of them. Certainly it's different when the CAO is that way."

He felt details of the challenges Schlange felt he faced should be discussed in order for council to either address or dismiss them appropriately.

"We get better as a result of having people like Harry Schlange there," Gale said, calling the letter "a wake-up call."

However, his departure "doesn't change a lot of things in my mind," he said. "We just move on from there."

Niagara-on-the-Lake Council Gary Burroughs wasn't sur-

prised by the resignation, following tension at the Region "for the last little while."

Postmedia Network learned in February that during a marathon closed-door Jan. 15 council meeting, councillors debated a motion that, if passed, would have directed Regional Chair Alan Caslin to dismiss the CAO.

That motion failed to pass, but another motion did — one striking a task force of four councillors to hire a "mentor" to assist Caslin and Schlange, whose relationship was marked by tension in 2015.

The Standard cannot confirm whether a mentor has been hired.

Burroughs said he's sorry to see Schlange go, as he's done a lot for small communities" and has worked to bring Niagara together.

"I'm glad he wanted to go, but it is what it is and we move on," he said, adding he felt some councillors were trying to make the situation seem worse than it is.

Burroughs believes the Region should hire a headhunter to cast a wide net across the country to find the best replacement, taking the time to do it properly.

"The biggest concern is if we try and short-circuit that system and bring in somebody some people think will be perfect for the job without going through the process," he said. "Hopefully we'll spend some time and do it right. It's a long process."

Lincoln Council Bill Hodgson said employees must be made to feel valued, empowered to do their jobs and empowered to take some risk, "because you never do great things unless you take a few risks," he said.

"It was Harry's determination that those fundamentals were lacking, then I suspect that he's made a decision that wasn't just in his best interest but in the best interest of the entire corporation."



Niagara Falls regional Councilor Bob Gale



Welland Mayor, Frank Campion

Hodgson believes a "professional process" for finding a new CAO is "absolutely essential," though he fears that thought may not be shared by everyone around the council table.

It's key, he said, that a common vision be decided upon and the "narrow vision of a small number of councillors" not be allowed to lead the process.

There was "some wavering from a professional process" during that last CAO recruitment, which led to Schlange's hiring, Hodgson said. "There was a pretty considerable deviation from best practices," he said, declining to go into further detail.

"While it was not a fatal flaw, it probably has something to do with the result we see today."

Based on Schlange's description of the situation in his resignation letter, Welland Mayor Frank Campion felt the CAO's departure was an appropriate move.

"I feel that's his opinion of what's going on and certainly if he's not satisfied with the situation he has every right to move on and look somewhere else for a job," he said.

"You'd have to get both sides of every story. A lot of these issues may be perceptual," he said, adding it may only lead to finger-pointing.

"Do we want to dwell on it? I'm not sure it's productive." St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik called Schlange's resignation a "big loss for Niagara."

"I think Harry was a change agent," he said, adding the CAO did a lot of "good work building the one team model at the Region."

He's hopeful an equally strong replacement can be found.

"My concern is we lose time," Sendzik said, adding bringing in new talent means time is needed to learn the system. "Every CAO wants to imprint their stamp on things. That's time we can't afford to lose. Unfortunately this is going to set us back a bit."

Council and senior staff will have to come together in the meantime to "fill the void" and work harder to keep Niagara on the right track, he said.

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Twitter: @mfrithStandard

Building project at Peace Bridge to decrease congestion

Another step toward reducing traffic congestion at the International Peace Bridge has been completed with the renovation of the U.S. Customs commercial building.

The US\$24-million project is one of several projects included in a 2013 agreement between Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Canadian Ambassador Gary Doer. The agreement outlined \$150 million in

improvements to smooth the way at one of the busiest crossings for both passenger and commercial vehicles along the northern border. The newly renovated U.S. customs buildings houses several federal agencies, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Department of Agriculture. Officials say the redesign will improve efficiency.

— The Associated Press

Steven Wright

The voice of "K-Billy's Super Sounds of the 70s" the "guy on the couch," the Oscar-winning filmmaker, the Emmy-winning producer, the Grammy-nominated stand-up master and the dead-pan king of the one-liners!

APR 25

Big Bad Wolf

Australia's Winmill Theatre's hilarious re-creation of the misanthropic character "Wolfe" is not so big or bad after all!

APR 27

Kiran Ahluwalia

Her traditional and innovative hybrid of Indian and Pakistani grooves, Saharan desert blues and Western jazz shows us that borders are meaningless.

APR 27

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Redekop: Wetland boundaries 'out to lunch'

AUSTIN GOODER

Special to the Fort Erie Times

The Town of Fort Erie may soon have a solution for their significant wetland problem.

Since 2004, the Town has had much of its industrial lands neutralized by Ontario's Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW) policy that aims to protect wetlands the government deems "most valuable" to the ecosystem.

According to Mayor Wayne Redekop, initial surveys by the province that created PSW boundaries within the Town's urban boundary were conducted via aerial photography.

"A lot of that is accurate, there's no doubt, but some of it is out to lunch," Redekop said.

By using aerial photos, Redekop said the province was "essentially estimating in some spots," and those spots have wound up incorrectly locking in properties that aren't necessarily wetland.

Ontario's PSW policy blocks development on lands that are pegged as provincially significant wetlands that makes it difficult

for Town staff to maximize industrial or employment lands within the urban boundary.

"(PSW) do create impediments for development wherever they do exist," Redekop said.

"But there are some ways to work with them. We can work with Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority to confirm whether or not they're wetlands, or we can develop around them or re-designate them."

Rick Brady, the Town's director of community and development services, approximates that 15 per cent of Fort Erie's urban boundary land is PSW designated.

Brady agrees that some of the boundaries are questionable at best.

"We find that sometimes, if you go out on the property, it's very difficult to understand why they're considered provincially significant wetlands," Brady said.

He said provincial representatives have been called to Fort Erie on occasion to help reassess PSW boundaries, but those visits are few in number and hard to get.

In the interim, the Town

and developers have relied on just avoiding PSW boundaries entirely.

"We try and accommodate developers but also not broach on the protected lands," Brady said.

Redekop said avoiding the areas has worked so far, but to optimize employment lands in town, they'll need a more wide-sweeping solution to the problem.

"The wetlands are an impediment because they essentially sterilize the ability of the property owner to use the land," Redekop said.

Of utmost frustration to Redekop and Town staff is the Town's inability to expand outside of the urban boundary. If this was possible, the Town could leave PSW boundaries alone and develop in areas where there is no conflict, according to Redekop.

Since 2005, Town staff, elected officials and Regional representatives have had 14 unique meetings with provincial staff in an effort to create a tool that would enable Fort Erie to both maximize their employment lands while also protecting key PSW areas.

In the fall of 2015, Ontario opened an opportunity for municipalities to provide comment on a new idea for working with wetlands known biodiversity offsetting, or "No Net Loss."

No Net Loss is fairly self descriptive. The province presented the idea that municipalities may be able to remove PSW boundaries in one area for the purpose of development, with the stipulation that they create a new PSW boundary of equal size in another area.

Fort Erie's Regional councillor and vice chairman of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Sandy Annunziata, said he believes a balance can be struck between protecting important wetlands and clearing less important wetlands for the purpose of job growth.

"We're not talking about those great green spaces outside of our town. No one would ever consider razing 100-year-old growth forests and watersheds," Annunziata said.

Annunziata said he mostly sees No Net Loss being used on private

properties that remain undeveloped and subsequently designated PSW after not being cleared for time.

Property owners who either purchased property while it was cheap, or otherwise decided to develop in the future, are now left locked out of the property they own due to conflicts with the province's criteria for designating PSW boundaries.

The evaluation system the province uses is called Ontario Wetland Evaluation System (OWES), and it is a province-wide list of criteria that indicate whether or not a zone is PSW or not.

The list includes vegetation such as Pin Oak, but also includes more complex criteria like soil mapping and water runoff.

The Town is capable of developing around protected wetland areas, but the difficulties created by two protected zones in close proximity to one another can make development incredibly expensive in certain areas.

"We absolutely could service these lands, but by having to zig-zag around protected areas, you're just driving up the cost to massive numbers," Annunziata said.

"The point of offsetting for Fort Erie would be lessening the burden on our employment lands, and to provide fully-served industrial lands for

industrial growth," he continued.

Both Redekop and Annunziata emphasized the Town's history of environmental conservation.

Redekop believes the town is at a critical juncture here.

"We can do this in a way in which we take advantage of natural heritage areas Fort Erie has," he said.

"Not many communities get to grow in a distinctive way. We have an opportunity to do that here."

If No Net Loss did ever become a reality outside of a provincial white paper, the Town would have to decide between continuing to work around PSW boundaries in town, or finding a way to adequately meet provincial standards required to meet the hypothetical No Net Loss policy.

Redekop said that any action made on PSW will keep the environment as the most primary concern.

He said the NPCA is expected to address Town councillors regarding the prospective development of a No Net Loss policy for Fort Erie and the future of the Town's provincially significant wetlands at a council meeting in May.

Austin Gooder is a Niagara College Journalism-Print student. You can send him an e-mail to austingoodermedia@gmail.com.

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Monday through Friday

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For information contact: Town of Fort Erie at 905-871-1600.

NCC students celebrate Earth Day

Niagara Christian Community of Schools gave its students a chance to learn more about the environment and what sort of impact they have on it during their Earth Day celebrations in advance of this Friday.

Last week on Friday, students took to the Niagara River to help clean up trash from the scenic route before returning to campus to allow festivities to begin.

The celebrations included an

assembly where students heard from Niagara College students who spoke about the dangers presented to Fort Erie by the Emerald Ash Borer beetle.

Much of Fort Erie's tree canopy is ash, so the students were

working with town staff to look at potential strategies used in fighting the beetle's growth.

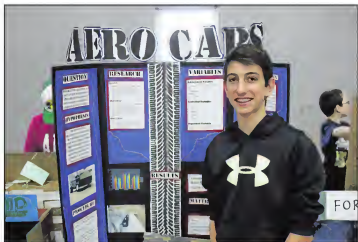
Later in the afternoon, students showed off their own hard work when they demonstrated their science projects

to visitors that included Mayor Wayne Redekop and speakers from several local conservation groups.

NCC principal Mark Thiessen encouraged students during the assembly to take their

responsibilities in the environment seriously.

"Our role as stewards of the environment is important, as we must protect the environment for future generations," Thiessen said.



AUSTIN GOODER/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Anthony Molon, a Niagara Christian Community of Schools student, demonstrated his bold ideas at the school's science fair.



AUSTIN GOODER/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Niagara Christian Community of Schools celebrated the hard work of its students by showing off their science projects during their Earth Day celebration.



AUSTIN GOODER/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

At Niagara Christian Community of Schools' Earth Day event, students got a hands-on look at an ecosystem model as part of their science fair.



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■ **Regained virility in three days.** My libido was restored for good. I've also given it to friends with the same results. One of them is a 6'2" dancer and overweight. **Dr. Louis Rivkind, 72, St. Josephine, CO**

■ **Wow! I feel like thirty years ago.** My partner said I should have done it a lot sooner. She is one happy partner again. **John Mearns, 67, ON**



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■ **Helps with abdominal good feeling and regularity.** I am aware that good colon cleanse and care is important to prevent cancer. This Bell Colon Care & Cleanse #74 is excellent. I used others before that did not give this feeling of well-being. **Lovers Simpson, 52, Kings Park, NY**

■ **With Colon Care & Cleanse care I feel 5 lbs and am regular now!** I wish I had regular bowel movements and tried Bell Colon Care & Cleanse #74. On the second day taking it I had 5 bowel movements. Now I have 2-3 a day. I feel better and have more energy as well. My clothes are starting to fit again. **Henry Hurley, 74, San Diego, CA**

■ **Colon Care #74 gave regularity and well being!** I had problems with my bowels my whole life. Usual bowel movement was only every 2-3 weeks. After starting Bell Colon Care & Cleanse #74 I was truly amazed that I had bowel movement 3 times next day. After 1 month taking this product my skin, hair, energy and taste well being was all there. This product really works well. **Tacey Sullivan, 47, Burnaby, BC**



426 NPN 80041146

Hearing Loss

■ **Amazed at what I can hear now!** I felt isolated from people, because I could not hear them talk well anymore. Being able to hear without hearing aid is so freeing. **Linda Botcher, 68, Mayaville, NC**

■ **Hey! Hey! Hey! I could hear the kittens meowing again!** I could hear water dripping again. The ringing in the ears it always had is gone. **John O'Sullivan, 60, Molana, DA**

■ **Wow! says she does not want to repeat things as often!** Hearing loss is a men difficult to overcome that need to get glasses. Hearing aids cause a lot of back-rang noise and I can hear my own increased voice. **Charles Myro, 70, Thonit, ON**



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■ **True success stories:** ■ **Was on 3 blood pressure drugs.** That did not work. After starting Bell Blood Pressure Formula my readings are normal and will below 120/80. **Dora A. Anderson, 78, Cooke, BC**

■ **At work** my doctor's medical test was to high at 170/100. After taking Bell product 426 for a few days, my BP went down to 120/84, which allowed me to pass my work medical. **Kim Goe, 48, Windsor, ON**



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■ **I've been married for thirteen years** and never experienced climaxes in the last twelve years - until I took Ensay! My new sex life is exciting! **Wendy, a critical-care Nurse, 37, American Fork, UT**

■ **My sexual desire is greater now than** I was for thirty years. It's wonderful to have such sexual joy. I've tried other stuff that didn't work. **Joe Lamson, 48, Kogman, AZ**

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■ **Cancelled lower replacement.** I was in pain and limping. I have no more pain now and can dance for hours. **Anna Melnichuk, Richardson, Plain, ON**

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■ **Lost 15 lbs in 3 months.** Bell Shape & Health naturally helped my metabolism and actually gave me more energy for workouts. My thyroid and family are on it now too. **Lizeta Dominguez, 20, Shreveport, LA**

■ **Shape & Health decreased my appetite for** sugary food. Lost 25 lbs this month. I feel I have more energy. **Thank you Barbara Auerbach, 66, Sopk, OK**



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■ **Lower back pain relief.** Took 2 capsules and I felt right. Next morning my back pain was completely gone. **Hearing aid and drowsy did not help.** **Valerie Peoples, 33, Jonesboro, GA**

■ **Parking lot officer had** stress relief, no more angry chest pain, increased blood circulation in cold weather, has now also heard words and feel. **Phil Phelps, 47, Windsor, ON**

■ **For 30 years** had inflammation in my knee from Bell gams. A good medicine was recommended (Curcumin is an extract). After I took had 50% pain relief. I was amazed how quickly it took effect. As a bonus had other health benefits including insomnia relief. **Dan Oakes, 62, Maricopa, ON**



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By Dr. Chakhi Hammond, M.D., Ph.D.

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■ **For twenty years** my life was miserable with sneezing, watery eyes and sinus pressure year-round on most days. I was amazed. On the third day, all of my allergies were gone. It was like magic. **Becky Carey, 25, Dover, OH**

■ **Gelling without allergy attacks.** I tried all the medications and none worked. After taking one capsule in the morning, I'm completely free of all symptoms. **Richard Gomez, 74, San Antonio, TX**



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CHAD MCGEE/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Approximately 1,000 people attended the second annual Albino Rhino Beer Festival last year. This year's event will be held May 14 at the Sanctuary Centre for the Arts.

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Albino Rhino Beer Fest set for May 14

SARAH FERGUSON
Fort Erie Times

The Albino Rhino Beer Festival will bring the best brewers Niagara has to offer together in one place.

The third annual Albino Rhino Beer Festival, set for May 14 at the Sanctuary Centre for the Arts in Ridgeway, will take place from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"I think people enjoy the small grass roots feel and the selection. I think we have one of the best craft beer selections in Ontario for festivals," organizer Chad McGee said about why people enjoy the festival.

"This year, we will have a mix of new and well known options."

The Albino Rhino Beer Festival will offer a choice of 31 craft alcohol vendors from across Niagara including the Brimstone Brewery, Niagara East House and Silversmith Brewing Company and Ontario.

There will also be a variety of food to try with 10 different food trucks on site. Last year, approximately 1,000 people attended the festival and McGee is hoping this year's attendance will reach as high as 1,400 people.

With each admission, guests will receive a sampling cup and three drink tokens. Extra drink tokens cost \$2 each.

Tickets can be purchased in advance for \$20 or \$25 at the door.

All of the proceeds from the festival will be donated to Ronald McDonald House Hamilton, a non-profit charity that provides accommodations for families with ill children receiving treatment in the Hamilton area.

"I wanted to do something for children. Children and charities mean a lot to me," McGee explained about why he wanted to donate the festival's proceeds.

"I know a lot of people that have used (Ronald McDonald House Hamilton). Luckily, I haven't had to. But I know they do some pretty amazing things for people."

In its first year, the festival raised \$1,120, and \$2,755 in its second year.

Although he doesn't have a number in mind, McGee said he would like to top the money raised from last year, to make this year's donation to Ronald McDonald House Hamilton the biggest yet.

Tickets are available at Brimstone Brewing Company and can also be purchased online at www.ticketscene.ca/events/14687/.

salferguson@postmedia.com



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Fort Erie's Justin Preston continues to raise awareness about bullying

SARAH FERGUSON
Fort Erie Times

Justin Preston knows all too well what it feels like to be bullied.

It's a painful experience and it's something Preston talks about often with children and teens much younger than him.

"When I get the chance to talk to kids who have been bullied, I feel like I've known them forever," he said.

"I feel like they're my friends because we've both experienced something similar. I relate to them as people, struggling and suffering, so I let them talk."

The Fort Erie resident is currently known by many people around the world for the Rise Against Bullying Campaign he launched online. Thousands of people reach out to Preston on the social media sites he runs such as Facebook and Twitter to talk about how they've been impacted by bullying.

He responds to each person with messages of hope. Preston wants everyone—especially young children—to know that "it's okay to be different."

Since January, Preston has been on tour with Saidat, a motivational speaker and singer, who speaks to thousands of students about bullying, self-esteem, compassion and friendship.

Last year, Saidat invited Preston to tour their Get Up and Stand Up Tour for four days and ended up staying "until the end of the summer."

"She invited me back this

year and I've been able to go to every single event she did since January," he said.

"I've been to I don't know how many cities and towns. We usually leave at four in the morning from Saidat's home in London and get to a school we are speaking at by 8 a.m."

The goal of Saidat's tour is to spread the message that "one person can make a difference and together, we can change the world."

At 23, Preston has achieved his dream of becoming a motivational speaker and shares his own story about being bullied as a youth.

When Preston was a teenager, he was bullied after he revealed to a friend that he was gay.

"When I meet kids that have been bullied I tell them my dreams are coming true," he said.

"I tell them that I got the chance to join Saidat's tour. I get to send them a positive message through dance, workshops and sharing my story at all the schools I visit. I get to be interactive with the students. I get to hear different stories every single day."

Preston joined Saidat for the Be a Champ event held at Budweiser Gardens in London, Ont. on April 6 where he spoke in front of thousands of students about being bullied. He was one of a number of motivational speakers.

"This was an amazing event where I had the chance to speak with all of these kids. I wasn't nervous, or scared," Preston said.

He hopes to educate peo-



SUBMITTED PHOTO/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Fort Erie's Justin Preston spoke out against bullying during the Be a Champ event held in London, Ont. on April 6.

ple about how bullying can be harmful to others by heading out on his own speaking tour at colleges and universities.

"Right now, I am working on a proposal and I hope to be taking it to school boards soon," Preston said.

He will take some time off

from touring to participate in the annual Walk So Kids Can Talk 5km walk on Sunday, May 1 in support of Kids Help Phone. Preston, having used the service himself, understands how important it is for teenagers to have someone to talk to when it seems like there is no hope.

"I had a lot of secrets. I didn't know if my friends were going to accept me for who I am," he said.

"When I didn't know where else to turn, calling kids help phone really helped."

A walk will be held in St. Catharines at 10 a.m. Reg-

istration begins at 8:30 a.m. at Jaycee Gardens Park, 543 Ontario St.

To make a donation visit <http://talkwalkskidsontario.ca/>, click 'donate' and under the location tab select 'London' and Preston's page.

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A once-in-a-lifetime Cuban journey leaves lasting impression

AUSTIN GOODER
Special to the Fort Erie Times

On his way to the Cuban coast, Dave Thomas' Purple BMW motorcycle sprung a leak.

When Thomas dismounted his bike, he saw the damage was beyond roadside repair.

"When I came around the front of the bike I saw the whole engine was covered in green antifreeze," Thomas said.

Thomas is now the president of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association of Niagara. Back then, however, he was just trying to get his head around Cuban culture.

He was approached by a young Cuban who didn't speak a word of English. Together, the two made a half-hearted attempt at fixing the radiator.

When their attempts failed, the man led Thomas to a local welder.

"He said, 'It's too thin. I can't weld.' Thomas said.

The welder had some heat tolerant epoxy that Thomas used to mend the break. The fix got him back to Havana.

Thomas was in Cuba just trying to experience it from an on-the-ground perspective.

With his motorcycle, he toured nearly every road in the country while adding over 30,000 kilometres to his bike's odometer.

Thomas developed a long-term interest in Cuba after talking to trade union members in Toronto who had been in touch with Cuban trade union members.



Dave Thomas of Fort Erie, stands beside the purple BMW motorcycle he rode for 33,000 kilometres in Cuba in the 90s.

AUSTIN GOODER/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

"I went down on a couple of tours, and we just went from one workplace to another," Thomas said.

Their group would listen to the stories of the Cuban workers. They'd ask questions and take in their surroundings.

"People still thought, well, it's a terrible place. It's not."

Once he retired, Thomas fell in love with touring Cuba via scooters he'd rent from tourist hotspots in Havana.

He came up with the idea of having his bike there with him, and set out to have it shipped down.

In August of 1997, Thomas and his BMW set out on

a year-long adventure filled with more ups and downs than the Sierra Maestras.

For the extent of his travel visa, Thomas was permitted to bring in a tourist vehicle without duty taxes.

When his visa neared expiration, Thomas looked for ways to extend his stay.

"I found out that if you're

sponsored by an organization that you can stay longer," he said.

The group of trade union workers Thomas had met years before agreed to sponsor his trip.

It became an opportunity for Thomas to explore the capabilities of himself and his trusted bike.

"I'd even write stories, go to events. They'd be printed in the *Port Colborne Leader*."

His experiences in Cuba were contradictory to what the media would suggest.

"People aren't restricted like we think they are," said Thomas.

CONTINUED PAGE 26



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Thomas' bike considered a rarity in Cuba

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

Other than money citizens shared many freedoms with Canadians, according to Thomas.

Of note is the strength of the Cuban healthcare system. Cuba is renowned in Latin states for having excellent doctors and training for medical students.

In fact, when Hugo Chavez took power in Venezuela, Cuba sent doctors and teachers to Venezuela to support the Chavez regime.

"For the first time, people had healthcare," Thomas said.

Thomas met a man in Cuba who had flown into Caracas, Venezuela and rode a bus for hours to a remote city that "wasn't rich, and wasn't poor."

The man told Thomas that he'd been treating patients who had never in their lives seen a doctor; treating diseases they hadn't seen in Cuba for generations.

What struck Thomas most was the revolutionary culture of the Cuban people.

When Fidel Castro first

took power, many Cubans didn't anticipate his rule would last more than a few years.

In 2016, the government propped up by Castro is still in power in Cuba. The determination of Cubans made this possible.

"The people saw that Fidel meant what he said, and they got behind him. They pushed him to follow through."

Thomas met a couple in Havana who taught at the local university.

The man, Antonio, told Thomas that Cubans were just as afraid of communism as Canadians were.

"He said, 'When we saw what Fidel was doing, well if that is communist then I'll be communist,'" Thomas said.

As Thomas toured Cuban roads, he wasn't just soaking in sun and salty air.

He got to witness firsthand the resilience of the Cuban people.

As the Cold War's grip on Cuba waned, Cubans were left in near-total poverty.

Thomas said Cubans told him they were considered

lucky if they could get a bar of soap.

"Antonio told me that they all lost weight. He even said the dog lost weight," Thomas said.

Thomas witnessed great times of turbulence for the Cuban people, but he also found himself right in the middle of a bomb scare that rocked Havana.

A group of Cuban expatriates in Miami had paid two Guatemalan nationals to detonate bombs in tourist hotels in Havana.

They were caught after a long series of bombings after a bathroom attendant recognized one of the bombers and alerted the police.

"The bombers were paid for every bomb that found its way into the news," Thomas said.

On the other hand, Thomas had a hands-on influence on one of Cuba's elections.

His sponsors got him into the area where Cuban volunteers were counting votes for a municipal election.

He was half-drafted, half-wittingly made to act as a

witness to the count.

"Oh, it was supposed to be someone born in Cuba. I know that for sure," said Thomas.

In the Fall, Thomas lived through a period of nationalism and celebration in Cuba.

Revolutionary leader Che Guevara's remains were discovered in Bolivia in an unmarked grave after a tip from a former Bolivian General.

Guevara had commanded the revolutionary forces to a decisive victory in Santa Clara, where Guevara, Fidel and Raul Castro and other revolutionary sympathizers defeated the authoritarian, US-backed Batista government.

"I took a bus into Santa Clara because I knew the roads would be way too packed for my hike," Thomas said.

Along the way from Havana to Santa Clara, a drive that should take about 3 hours, Thomas has encountered several security checkpoints and heavy traffic.

The country celebrated the return of Guevara's remains because he was instrumen-

tal in creating the Cuba we know today.

Cubans who lived through the revolution have been especially effective at carrying on the message from Guevara and Castro to new generations of Cubans.

The story is told from the angle of the ultimate sacrifice that the revolutionary forces paid.

Thomas believes that Canada has lost touch with its revolutionary past, because it happened so long ago here.

To him, however, the Cuban people are still faced with their triumph day-in and day-out.

High up in the Sierra Maestras, Thomas' BMW sits high in first gear as it drags itself up the concrete slope.

Thomas knows that if he stops, they're in trouble.

Should Thomas stall, it's likely he'd have to go down and start the winding, 700 metre ascent over again.

Through careful driving, Thomas steers the hike into an observation lot tucked into the side of the mountain range.

Thomas is on sacred

ground here.

In the midst of the revolution, Batista's army cornered the revolutionists in the dense, wooded Maestra peaks and valleys.

As Thomas chops through the brush, he realizes why the revolutionary forces were so safe hiding in the Maestras.

"I was walking along and a mule came out of nowhere only 10 or so feet in front of me," said Thomas.

"The rebels could have hid and ambushed Batista's troops no problem."

Later, Thomas cruises back along Cuban streets.

Often he gets pulled over, though he's never ticketed. The Cuban police are far more interested in checking out Thomas' bike, a rarity in Cuba.

If it begins to rain, Thomas doesn't pull over.

Instead, he allows the warm rains to cool him off.

Austin Gooder is a Niagara College Journalism-Print student. You can send him an e-mail to austinfoodermedia@gmail.com.



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NIAGARA FALLS

REVIEW

The Standard

THE TRIBUNE

Momentum Choir set to perform at Leisureplex

SARAH FERGUSON
Fort Erie Times

Momentum Choir is the only one of its kind in Canada and its performers are preparing to put on a show in Fort Erie.

Planned for Sunday, April 24 at the Fort Erie Leisureplex, Dorie Emerson said the Momentum Choir is "one of Niagara's jewels."

"The concert has been made possible thanks to the (Town's) Senior Citizen's Advisory Committee and we are lucky to have them," Emerson said.

With the support of Bethany Community Services and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Mendel Hoekstra founded the choir in 2007. The choir is unique in that it is made up solely of people with disabilities. Currently, the group has more than 45 members.

Emerson is grateful that Hoekstra has agreed to bring the choir to Fort Erie because "he is very selective where he goes." The choir receives many requests to sing, she said, and has performed at the House of Commons, as well as at churches, banquet halls, workshops and conferences.

Momentum choir will sing "a mix of new and old songs that will inspire and uplift everyone."

She encourages every-



FILE PHOTO/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Joel Chevalier sings during a rehearsal at Jubilee Church in St. Catharines in this file photo. Momentum Choir will be performing April 24 at the Leisureplex.

one who has never been to one of Momentum Choir's shows before to attend the concert at the Leisureplex because it "will be a fantastic show."

"When you listen to them sing, you will leave with a sense that you need to be kinder to all," Emerson said.

"Each of the members have varying degrees of disabilities but you don't even think about that when they perform. The members (of the choir) are so confident and smile when they sing. They leave you full of joy," she added.

The show will be at 1:30

p.m. followed by a lunch reception catered by Mae's Place. The cost of a ticket for Fort Erie residents is \$12 and \$24 for non-residents.

For tickets call 905-871-7761 or 905-871-2099.

saferguson@postmedia.com

WHO: The Momentum Choir
WHAT: The choir, established in 2007 by Mendel Hoekstra, with support from Bethany Community Services and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, will perform for the first time at the Fort Erie Leisureplex.

WHEN: Sunday, April 24 at 1:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$12 for Fort Erie residents and \$24 for non-residents. For tickets call 905-871-7761 or 905-871-2099.

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Bishops in the United Church of Canada? Some did serve in the Methodist Episcopal, Wisconsin Synod Lutheran and other pioneer components of this national church. A "barnturning" preacher in Evangelische Pennsylvania Deutsch congregations became Methodist bishop for a hisbeic supporting German speaking churches in the US northeast and Ontario. His cousin John Albright, Niagara Power developer, founded an art gallery in Buffalo; Uncle Amos and Aunt Maria Albright farmed in Beauville where Albright Gardens remains a retirement center for United Church workers. The portrait of Bishop Jacob Albright of the Evangelical Church (predecessor to Evangelical United Brethren as well as Evangelical and Reformed), hangs beside a plaque story at St. John's Stevensville United Church.

Sunday worship service 11:00 am; only minutes to Sodom Rd, Ft. Erie, just north of Stevensville, QEW exits 16 & 17.

Briefs

Craft sale to support local charity

Come and find the perfect gift for the most important women in your life at Niagara Area Children's Assistance Program's Mother's Day Craft and Vendor Fair on Saturday, April 23.

The event is hosted at the Fort Erie Legion from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Vendors include Scentys, Pampered Chef and Younique.

Tickets for the May 14 event are \$75 per person, or \$750 for a table of 10.

Tickets can be purchased by contacting Marina Butler at mbutler@forterie.ca or Stephen Passero at spassero@forterie.ca.

School hosts e-waste collection

Ridgeway and Bertie Public School is hosting an e-waste collection on Saturday, April 23, at the school on Hazel Street in Ridgeway from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

All collections will go toward purchasing new playground equipment for the new John Brant Public School. Items to be accepted include MP3 players, cameras, telephones, TVs, VCR & DVD players, recorders and radios. For more information call 905-894-3751.

Church hosts Spring Fling

All Saints' Anglican Church is hosting its annual Spring Fling Saturday, April 23 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The event, which will be held at 149 South Mill St., in Ridgeway, will offer plants, a bake table, household items, jewellery, books, puzzles and DVDs.

Tickets available for fundraiser

VIP tickets are now available for the Hollywood North fundraiser to benefit the Fort Erie Centre for the Arts.



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Answering the calls for help

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Postmedia network

They are Niagara's long-distance lifelines.

In a room deep inside the Niagara Regional Police station on Church Street in St. Catharines, the police "communicators" sit wearing headsets and staring at multiple computer screens.

They do double duty as 911 call-takers for all of Niagara and dispatchers for frontline officers on the road.

All day, every day, no matter how bad the situation at the other end of the line, they stay calm and focused.

"It is hard to even articulate all the skills they need," said Wendy Rung, a quality assurance and communications supervisor with the unit.

"They need good communication skills — verbally and written. They need listening skills. They need to be able to multi-task. They need decision-making skills."

"They also need to be patient, understanding and empathetic. And you can't stay in the job unless you are resilient."

It pays well. The starting salary is about \$80,000, provided he or she can pass the initial aptitude tests and complete the training that includes 800 hours for each component of the job, 400 hours for call-taking and another 400 hours for dispatching.

They talk calmly to people reporting gruesome tragedies or contemplating suicide. They also divert extraneous 911 calls. They don't dispatch patrol cars when someone runs out of toilet paper or finds a mouse in their kitchen.

They also are the police officer's lifeline on the street, co-ordinating resources, making notifications,

running checks, and getting help when and where they need it.

Minor mistakes can have major consequences. The stress level is high.

"From the perspective of an officer on the road, a good communicator also needs to be a good investigator," Const. Leslie Bitman said.

There have been times when the communicator has given me information I haven't had a chance to ask for — and all of a sudden I'm getting it, and I'm thinking the dispatcher is amazing.

"They also stay calm, and it helps you remain calm. When you are responding to a call, the adrenaline gets going. You want to get there fast, but you need to maintain a balance. They help with all those things. We appreciate them."

Bobbie Tarajos was selected as this year's NRP communicator of the year by her peers. She is a graduate of Brock University and worked in administration at Brock before taking a position with Niagara Regional Police in 2005.

She said she was "amazed and terrified" by her responsibilities in the communications unit.

"I heard once that a communicator is the most important person you'll never see," she said. "Very quickly I learned how true that statement is."

In 2015, the communications unit answered more than 450,000 emergency 911 calls and assisted frontline police officers in responding to more than 112,000 calls for service.

Their first task is to ascertain exactly where the call originated. Computer-aided dispatch helps but doesn't solve all the problems.

"It is always a risk that we will lose callers," Staff Sgt. David



JULIE JOSSAK/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Quality assurance supervisor Wendy Rung, left, and communicator Sarah Parent work in the dispatch centre at Niagara Regional Police headquarters in downtown St. Catharines.

Weeks said. "They discriminate. They lose power. The most important questions need to be asked first. The absolute priority will be a verified location and a call-back number. That alone allows us to respond and gives us the ability to call back someone we have lost."

There are about 70 communicators in all. They work in platoons of 14 with one supervisor. About 90 per cent are female. Weeks said it

isn't by design and there is no discrimination, but women seem to be better at multitasking, and if you can't do that, you can't do the job.

"There are times when you have a situation where they are talking with an officer on the other end who has been critically injured," Weeks said. "We have had this happen here. The communicator, I can assure you, was stretched to her emotional boundaries, but you listen to her voice, and it seems unaf-

fected.

"It's not that they don't care. It's the opposite, but they recognize that their voice may make a difference. Someone may have been shot or lit on fire. When the communicator stays calm, it helps everyone remember to stay calm. I know that sounds crazy, but you can't train them to do that. They either have it, or they don't."

bsawchuk@postmedia.com

Spring Fling

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A brick for all the dog poop complaints

Here's a brick for all the complaints about dog poop. Poop is a part of the natural environment as are dung beetles.

The sacred scarab beetle worshipped by the ancient Egyptians is a dung beetle. They depend on dung for food and they lay their eggs in poop to give their babies a head start in life. So let's give the dung beetle a break and let the poop lie.

Bouquet for the Town

Let's give a big bouquet to the Town of Fort Erie for replacing the old street lights with the new LED street lights. The new lights are considerably less intrusive than the old lights. They also light just the streets instead of the whole neighborhood. If this keeps up, perhaps some day we will be able to see the Milky Way from Fort Erie again. The lights are also cheaper to maintain.

Brick for poor customer service

Why does the local butcher store not carry what the paying consumers ask for? A brick for poor customer service. Do they understand we keep them in business? Customer service is very important! Stop making big corporate grocery stores look better.

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A brick for not spending more tax dollars in Fort Erie
A Big Brick goes out for the people responsible for once again spending every cent of our tax dollars in Ridgeway, and Crystal Beach and nothing in the rest of Fort Erie. I am so Disappointed.

A brick for not spending more tax dollars in Fort Erie

A brick for the sad, sad people who broke into our trucks in Ridgeway recently. I hope karma comes to get you. Thanks for taking my purse and leaving it down the street.

Good thing I don't keep money in my wallet. Thank you to the two ladies who found it and returned it to me! I can't thank you enough.

Brick for dog poop

A brick for all the dog poop and all the bags filled with giant dog turds that I find all around. I've seen dog poop bags thrown on the sidewalk, on bushes, hanging on a fence even. All I have to say is there are some pretty disgusting dog owners in this town. How hard is it to poop, scoop and carry it to a garbage can?

Send us your bricks and bouquets

Has someone done something nice for you and you would like to thank them? Do you have something to complain about? Send us your bricks and bouquets by e-mail to saferguson@postmedia.com, or drop them off to Fort Erie Times; 336 Central Ave.; Fort Erie, Ont.; L2A 3T6.

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Garrison Road students say no to bullying



SUBMITTED PHOTO/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Students from Garrison Road Public School held the Stand Up Concert last Tuesday, organized by the school's Stand Up Committee. The committee plans an assembly each month that includes skits, slide presentations, songs and dances to show students the power of their own voice and how important it is to stand up for themselves and for others against bullies. To highlight some of the powerful messages, the students performed some of their best songs and dances to a very full gymnasium. Last week, former students Bailey Arih and Kayla Jobst, the Stand Up Committee and students from Grades 3 to 8 perform a song.

Helping the DeRushie family



DAN STRUHAN/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Local service clubs partnered together to support the DeRushie family after they lost their Ridgeway home to a fire in March. The Ridgeway-Crystal Beach Kinsmen held a pasta dinner to raise cash and accepted donations. The Fort Erie Kinsmen Club and Fort Erie Kinette Club provided toys for the family's two children as well as gift cards and gently used clothing. All of the service groups attend the pasta night to present the family with the gifts. In this photo, which was taken at the pasta night hosted by the RCB Kinsmen, are Krista Graham RCB Kinsmen member Barb Morning, RCB Kinsmen President Lloyd McGuigan, Fort Erie Kinsmen treasurer Steve Sherwood, Fort Erie Kinette Eileen George, Fort Erie Kinsmen President Larry Graber and Megan DeRushie.



Fun at Trilside's

SUBMITTED PHOTO/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Kids danced up a storm with Marshall, the Paw Patrol dog at Trilside Bar and Grill in Ridgeway during the bar's Paw Patrol celebration last Tuesday. The event, which marked the fourth anniversary of Trilside's, was held as a way to give back to the community, said Trisha O'Brien, who co-owns the restaurant.



JULIE JOCSAK
/ POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Centre MP Vance Badaway chats with the crowd following an announcement about a Foreign Trade Zone Point in Niagara in St. Catharines last Friday. Niagara's new status will help foster private sector investment in the region and create jobs by providing access to government programs that defer or eliminate duties and taxes from products destined for export.

Trade zones have limited impact, so far

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

Niagara's new status as a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) Point will make the region more attractive to investors, but the change won't happen overnight.

Other areas across the country that have been designated FTZ have seen limited success as a result. The designation announced last week — the culmination of a decade of work by local economic development organizations — gives the region a competitive edge in luring investment, by offering easier access to government programs allowing qualified companies the ability to defer taxes and tariffs charged on goods being imported.

In 2008, a free trade zone was established in Winnipeg as a pilot project. And in the eight years since, CentrePort spokesperson Rhya Harrison said, three new customs bonded warehouses have set up shop in Manitoba's capital city as a direct result of the designation.

"I'm going to call it a moderate level of success," she said. One of the new warehouses in CentrePort imports specialty beers and ciders, usually from European countries, she said. The products are stored at the warehouse and then distributed throughout North America.

A foreign trade zone was designated in Regina last August, called the Global Transportation Hub. Since it has only been in place for eight months, Global Transportation's spokesperson Kelly Brossart isn't surprised the city has yet to see a new industry set up shop there.

"It's important for people to realize that decisions to invest millions

of dollars in an opportunity are not made very lightly, and they do take a long time to come to fruition," she said. "There are a number of opportunities that we are working on."

Nevertheless, she said it has made Saskatchewan's capital city more attractive to foreign investors.

"It does offer them that eligibility for the different programs that the federal government offers, like tariff and tax exemptions and duty deferrals," she said.

For potential investors, having an FTZ designation is "one of the key items on the checklist."

"It definitely keeps a geography from being excluded from consideration, because it is something that the foreign investor is looking for," Brossart said.

Despite the limited success, Harrison said Winnipeg's FTZ remains "an important tool to have in terms of marketing for business attraction and foreign investment," along with other incentives and amenities — not unlike Niagara's Gateway Economic Zone status.

She said the FTZ was established as a pilot project, to find a way to make it easier for industries to take advantage of federal government programs that can help reduce or eliminate tariffs and taxes on imported goods. Although those programs had been previously available, she said very few companies applied for them because they were too complicated, involving too many government departments.

"It just seemed to be more trouble than it was worth," she said.

But the FTZs were geared towards making access to those programs easier for companies by creating a task force to fast track applications

for companies, and marketing the benefits of the programs.

"This is a new, more centralized approach where it allows a jurisdiction to market it, to have sort of a single-window approach for applications, to have a task force with the expertise to go through the applications and advise companies."

Harrison said the FTZ programs

aren't for everyone.

She said the program "isn't a one-size-fits-all benefit that every company will be able to tap into. It will apply to very specific situations, which will have to be assessed on a case by case basis."

Niagara is the seventh region to receive the designation.

Last June, two FTZs were estab-

lished in Alberta, including one at the Edmonton airport and the second in Calgary.

An FTZ was created in Halifax a month later, and Port of Sydney in Nova Scotia was designated in February this year.

ABenner@postmedia.com
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Queen of Clubs lends a helping hand to COPE



SUBMITTED PHOTO/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

The Queen of Clubs held a euchre tournament on March 21 and raised \$750 for the food bank at Community Outreach Program Erie in Fort Erie. From left, Barb Volzke, manager of COPE, is pictured with Queen of Clubs members Wendy Gibson and Joan Dubé.

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Chamber welcomes new board of directors



SUBMITTED PHOTO/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

The Greater Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce introduced its 2016-2017 board of directors on April 14. From left are Jonathan George, Adam Lampman, Jesse Boles, Patrick Baichow, Natalie Miller, John Van Brussel, Maureen Murphy, Rick Phibbs, Rebecca Nigh, Gerry Brisson, Barb Scarlett, Stan Ball, Ed Melanson, Steve Helwig and Trent Matthews. Absent is Patricia Somerville.

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will be affected.**

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Brief

Fort Erie Duplicate Bridge results

Fort Erie Duplicate Bridge results for April 11.

North-South

1. Donna Pratt and Don Pratt, 60.83 per cent
2. Carole Murrill and Judy Majorosi, 56.25 per cent
3. Fay McIntee and Carolyn Cronin, 53.75 per cent
4. Shirley Pratt and Jean Mills, 48.75 per cent
5. Brenda Jamieson and Dana Harvey, 47.92 per cent
6. John Dunn and Sandra Dunn, 41.67 per cent
7. Diane Benner and Ellen Kenney, 40.83 per cent

East-West

1. Miriam Redden and Ed Hoover, 66.25 per cent
 2. Bud Watson and Joan Craine, 53.75 per cent
 3. Andre McDermott and Janet Doan, 50.42 per cent
 4. Liliane Mills and Wayne Mills, 48.75 per cent
 5. Jane Manske and Jim Manske, 46.67 per cent
 6. Jane Kaye and Peter Kaye, 43.33 per cent
 7. Eleanor Zanatta and Tessie Smith, 40.83 per cent
- The Fort Erie Duplicate Bridge Club meets weekly at the Douglas Heights Senior Centre on Monday nights.

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Skating club hosts annual carnival



SUBMITTED PHOTO/SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

The Crystal Ridge Figure Skating Club held its annual carnival at the Fort Erie Leisureplex on April 6, giving its skaters a chance to show off the skills they have learned this year. Danica Biko, a member of the Crystal Ridge Skating Club's pre-junior group pulls off some scary moves during Monster Mash at the club's Can Skate carnival.



Boys from the Crystal Ridge Skating Club's Can Skate program dressed up as construction workers and skated to the song 'Taking Care of Business' during the club's carnival.



Emma Mowers of the Crystal Ridge Skating Club's Pre-Junior program skated in a solo demonstration at the club's carnival.

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Junior skaters at the Crystal Ridge Skating Club's Can Skate carnival dressed up in costumes and showed off their hard work from the past several months. The club uses the Can Skate Carnival to wrap up their year.

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A look at baseball in Fort Erie during the Roaring Twenties

Anyone who grew up in the Greater Fort Erie area has probably experienced the many sports activities that are readily available to them and their family in town.

To appreciate the passion for sports in Fort Erie, you might have to go back into the 1920s where it all started.

During that decade, the Mentholum baseball team won the Ontario Championship.

The town's first arena opened on Douglas Street, and horse racing was held at the old Madigan Track, where the current clubhouse now stands.

Several private and public golf courses were active, and lawn bowling could be found in Bridgeburg and Rideway.

An article by Charles Davies in the "Many Voices" of Fort Erie history highlights baseball as the dominating sport of the time.

The Mentholum baseball team was the pride of the community then.

George Stratton, general manager of the Mentholum Company, sponsored the local team that practiced at the diamond at the foot of Bowen Road on the Niagara Parkway.

The park was considered great in that era. It had covered bleachers, protective netting, wooden dugouts and a small snack shack.

My dad and uncle would tell me stories of how good this team was.

A huge number of fans followed the team.

I kind of thought they were exaggerating, but my research suggests they were probably understating the facts.

This Bridgeburg Mentholum team was the pride of the community after winning the Western Ontario Championship in 1925 and 26.

A crowd of nearly 500 fans gathered at the railroad station in 1926 to see the team off to play for the All Ontario Championship game against Deloro in Oshawa.

There was an open telephone line set up at Rung's Garage on Jarvis Street, and fans packed the downtown as far as Eimerick Avenue to hear the play-by-play of the game. They lost the game, but the team left a lasting impression on the fans for years to come.

Later, baseball shifted to Oakes



SUBMITTED PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE FORT ERIE TIMES

Pride and joy of Bridgeburg sports enthusiasts in the twenties was the Mentholum baseball team, which made history in sports circles in this district and beyond. This picture, taken in 1925, shows (from left, top row) Norman D. Graham, Jake Hewitt, Frank Spitzer, Jack Williamson, W.C. Tait, Bert Walton, Bill Near, Vince Upper, Wes Benner, Hack Price, Frank Dunn, (seated or kneeling) George H. Stratton, Tommy Fraser, Jack Houck, Freddy Bowen, Harvey Russell, H.A. (Skip) Howe, Ray Young, Frank Gallagher, Ernie Thomas, Mary Cavanaugh, Percy Plato, Charlie Graham and Ira Atwood. The bat boy is Alex McFarish.

Park land, which was donated by Sir Harry Oakes.

Our feature picture is of the Bridgeburg Mentholum Team in 1925.

If anyone has information or stories on outstanding sports teams or individuals, you can email The Sports Gallery and Research Centre at feheritag@outlook.com

esports@outlook.com
Vern Benner is the editor at Fort Erie's Sports Memorabilia and Research Centre for the Heritage Arts Legacy.

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Obituaries

Obituaries



ARCURI, Carmine - Passed away after a brief illness on April 21, 2016 at Greater Niagara G.H. at the age of 64. Loving husband of Doreen Arcuri (Daniel). Dear father of David Arcuri, Shelley (Ed) and Lisa Laporte (Mike), and brother to Barbara Scarfone. Loving son of the late Maria Maddalena & Pietro Arcuri. Also predeceased by his brother Antonio (Lucia) of Italy and his sister Barbara Arcuri. Stepfather of John Jr, James, and Sheri (Kye). Also survived by grandchildren Taylor, Brooke & Gracyn Arcuri, Maya & Ana Laporte, Owen & Even Hodel along with many Uncles & Aunts, Nieces & Nephews. He will sadly missed by his "chosen" brother Gary Blakely of Ridgeway. Carm had a large extended family with Doreen and a special bond with his grandson David Daniel. At Carm's request cremation has taken place and a celebration of life will be at a later date late this fall. Arrangements entrusted to **NIAGARA FUNERAL ALTERNATIVES**, 905-894-0120.

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Jean Paul Richter

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In Memoriams

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STOUGHTON, Ellis LeRoy - Peacefully passed away on April 16th in his 72nd year. He was the beloved husband of 49 years to Barbara. Dearly loved father of Paula (Fred) and Tanya (Mark). Cherished grandfather of Candice, Kevin, Kirsten, Nathan, Freddie and Royce, and Great papa Ellis to Axel. Treasured son of (Eves) Stoughton and brother to Evelyn (James) Garry (Lorraine). Lovingly remembered by his many in-laws Joan (Charles), Shirley (Mike), Thelma, Ronald, Denzil (Sally), Bernie (Sharon), Rene (Pauline), Linda (Rodger), Michael (Joanille) and many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his father Roy Stoughton and his mother-in-law and father-in-law Leander and Sadie Deschamps, brothers-in-law Leo, Desmond, and Walter, sisters-in-law Patricia, Rita, Glinda, and John Mucet. Special thanks to Dr Che and the staff at Jurviski Cancer Center and Greater Niagara Hospital. Cremation has taken place and a Celebration of Ellis' life will be held on Sunday April 24th at 1pm at the Crystal Ridge Community Center on Ridge Rd. South, Crystal Beach. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Jurviski Cancer Centre (<http://hamiltonhealth.ca/jhccf-main/>).

Arrangements entrusted to
NIAGARA FUNERAL ALTERNATIVES,
905-694-0120.



CAPLAN, Murray - March 28, 1938 - April 15, 2016 - Retired pharmacist. Murray Caplan is survived by his loving wife of 46 years, Vi Caplan, son Stephen Caplan and grandchildren Jessie & Troy Caplan. The family sends thanks to Dr. Kamatovic and all the caring nursing staff at Greater Niagara General Hospital. Special thanks to our friends and family at the YMCA. The family welcomes warm thoughts and donations to the Leukemia Foundation (www.leukemafoundation.org). No visitation or service.

"Until we meet again at the races!"
All our love, the Caplan family.
Arrangements entrusted to
NIAGARA FUNERAL ALTERNATIVES,
905-694-0120.

BARKLEY, Evelyn May - Evelyn passed away suddenly on Wednesday April 13th, 2016 at the age of 85. Beloved wife of Edward. Loving daughter of Awinna and the Late Gordon McDonald. Proud mother of Cory Swick, Cherished step-mother of Kevin (Lisa), Ken (Cindy) and Ed Jr. Cherished grandmother of Blake, Chelsea, Brooklyn and Cote. Sadly missed by her brother Gord (Lyn) McDonald and many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by her grandson Holden. Evelyn was a long-time employee of the Niagara Regional Police Force where she served as the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Chiefs. She was long-time member and supporter of the Barrie/Wilfrid and Port Colborne Saddle Clubs. **BENNER FUNERAL SERVICES**, 1105 Benner Ave., Fort Erie entrusted with arrangements. The family received friends on Sunday from 2-4 and 6-9 pm. Funeral Services will be held in the Funeral Chapel on Monday morning at 11 o'clock. Cremation to follow. If so desired, donations to the Trillium Gift of Life Foundation or the Fort Erie S.P.C.A. would be appreciated by the family.



HODGE, Robbin Cruise - Robbin passed away peacefully at home on April 12th, 2016 surrounded by the love of his family after a courageous battle with cancer in his 66th year. Loving husband of Linda (née Law). Proud father of Todd (Sandra) and Tyler (Julie). Cherished grandfather of Phoebe, Owen, Lily and Christian. He will be sadly missed by his twin brother Richard "Dick" Jamie, Bruce (Nadia) and sister Heather (Tom) Pongray and several nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his parents William and Gladys and his brother Scott. Robbin will always be remembered for his love of family, gardening and his generosity and kindness of heart. We as a family express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Neumannschill and her team, to St. Elizabeth nurses Pat and Alex, and to Dr. Scher for the outstanding care that he received. In keeping with Robbin's wishes, cremation has taken place and a private celebration of his life will take place at a later date in lieu of flowers, donations to the Walker Family Cancer Centre through the One Foundation would be appreciated by the family. **BENNER FUNERAL SERVICES**, Fort Erie entrusted with arrangements.

BURD, Keith Arthur - Suddenly at his residence on Friday April 15, 2016, Keith Burd of Norwich, formerly of Ridgeway, at the age of 67. Loving husband of Heather. Dear father of Cami Burd-Talton of St. Catharines, Valerie Hyska and husband Steve of Petawawa. He will be sadly missed by his grandchildren Kacie Hyska and Jake Talton. Survived by his mother Mary Lou Burd of Fort Erie. Predeceased by his father Arlie Burd. A casual celebration will be held at Ridgeway Legion Br. #230 on Monday April 25, 2016 at 12:00 p.m. As expressions of sympathy, donations may be made to Heart and Stroke Foundation. Arrangements entrusted to **THE ARM-LOCKIE FUNERAL HOME**, Norwich (519) 863-3020. Memorials and condolences at www.arm-lockiefuneralhome.com.



HUZARSKI, Neil - November 16, 1951 - April 23, 2015. In loving memory of a dear husband, dad and grandfather.

It only takes a little space to write; how much we miss you, But it will take the rest of our lives, to forget the day we lost you.

Love, Dee, June, Kira & Mason.



Obituaries

DOUG REAMAN

In loving memory of a dear Father, Grandfather and Great Grandfather who passed away April 24, 2005.

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No matter what we do
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Lovingly remembered by
Judy, Ron, Aleasha, Ty and Carter

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really lost
as long as you
remember it.

• Ally Condie,



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